

## REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Date of entry in Register: 06 January 2000  
Name of applicant/court: Christian Heritage Party  
Applicant to the Labelling Body: Not Applicable  
Title of Publication: Lolita  
Other Known Titles: Not Stated  
Director: Adrian Lyne  
Producers: Mario Kassar, Joel Michaels  
Publisher: Not Applicable  
Author: Not Applicable  
Format: Film 35mm  
Country of Origin: USA  
Language: English

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### Components of film originally examined:

|           |        |                     |        |
|-----------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| Feature:  | Lolita | Running time:       | 139.14 |
| Trailers: | Nil    | Running time:       |        |
|           |        | Total Running time: | 139.14 |

Excision/Alteration: No.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

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Classification Decision:

Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.

Display Conditions:

Nil.

Descriptive Note:

Contains content that may offend.

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Direction to issue a label has been given on: 08 December 1999

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**SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:**

The film *Lolita* is based on the classic novel of the same name by Vladimir Nabakov. Humbert Humbert is a 38 year old Englishman who travels to America to take up an academic post and marries Lolita's mother so that he can be in contact with Lolita.

With regard to matters of sex, the central theme of the film is Humbert's love for Lolita and his sexual obsession with her but there is little sexual activity depicted in the film and that which is depicted is mostly implied. There is no nudity in any of the scenes involving Humbert and Lolita. There are some scenes where they are kissing and there are two instances where sexual intercourse between them is implied. There are a number of instances in the film where Lolita is portrayed in a sexualised manner. In these scenes she is portrayed as both sexual and childlike.

The film does not seek in any way to sensationalise the relationship between Humbert and Lolita but rather presents the hopelessness of the situation in a moving way without condoning or approving it.

Humbert is permitted in the film to explain his thoughts and behaviour but his conduct is not condoned in the film and nor is paedophilia. On the contrary, in its overall content, the message which is conveyed is that the relationship is wrong and the consequences which follow are tragic for all concerned.

The Board are of the view that a more mature audience of 18 years and over would take that message from the film.

While Humbert is portrayed as an adult man involved in a sexual relationship with a girl presented as 14 years, and thereby exploiting her for his own sexual desires, the film does not promote or tend to promote that activity.

The fact of the portrayal of the relationship in a film does not necessarily of itself promote or support or tend to promote or support that relationship. And nor does the fact that the viewer is given access to Humbert's thoughts and feelings that this necessarily taints the viewer and is injurious to the public good.

The Board was of the view therefore that s.3(2)(a) which provides that a publication shall be deemed to be objectionable for the purposes of the Act if it promotes or supports or tends to promote or support the exploitation of young persons for sexual purposes was not breached.

The film also dealt with a matter of violence relating to a lengthy and vivid combination of scenes when Humbert kills an adult man who has seduced Lolita and involved her in child pornography. However, the aspects arising out of these scenes were a mixture of violence, surrealism and farce and the mix of such elements lessens the impact of the violent depictions.

The Board gave weight to the extent and degree to which and the manner in which the film might come within the matters set out in s.3(3) of the Act as well as the dominant effect of the publication as a whole and the age groups of the persons for whom the film was intended or likely to be made available (as in s.3(4)).

For the above reasons, the Board was also of the view that the film's availability be restricted to 18 years and over with a descriptive note of a more general nature of "content that may offend" because of the nature of the relationship rather than restricting the note to any particular matter.

OFLC Ref: 9902236